

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 SP-02 STR-04 TRSE-00 LAB-04
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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1672
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN
AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG EEC UK
SUBJECT: PREPARATIONS FOR EC ENERGY COUNCIL MARCH 29

REF: EC BRUSSELS 2142

1. HANNAY (EGERTON'S REPLACEMENT AS HEAD OF FCO ENERGY DEPARTMENT) GAVE US A RUNDOWN ON THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE MARCH 29 EC ENERGY COUNCIL WHICH TRACKED WITH REFTEL. HE SAID SECSTATE BENN WANTS TO USE THE COMMISSION'S GLOOMY REVIEW PAPER ON THE ENERGY SITUATION IN THE EC AS BACKGROUND FOR A POLITICAL DISCUSSION WHICH WILL GIVE
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HIM INSIGHT INTO JUST WHAT ACTIONS THE ENERGY MINISTERS ARE PREPARED TO TAKE OVER THE COMING MONTHS. IN LINE WITH HIS PHILOSOPHY OF OPEN GOVERNMENT, BENN ALSO HOPES DESPITE OBJECTIONS TO TAKE UP AT LEAST ONE ITEM--ENERGY CONSERVATION--IN OPEN SESSION WITH THE PRESS PRESENT. THE UK WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS INITIATIVE LEAD TO MORE MONEY BEING DEVOTED TO EC ENERGY CONSERVATION R AND D AND

DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.

2. THE BRITISH SEE THE MARCH 29 SESSION AS A CURTAIN-RAISER TO A FOLLOW-ON COUNCIL MEETING IN JUNE WHEN DECISIONS ON VARIOUS ENERGY ISSUES WOULD BE MADE. HANNAY CAUTIONED THAT NOTHING STARTLING IS APT TO HAPPEN THIS TIME ROUND RESPECTING THE EURATOM LOAN SCHEME, AN MSP FOR CRUDE OIL OR THE EC EMERGENCY SHARING SCHEME. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE THOUGHT THE LONG TERM PROGRAM FOR COKING COAL SUBSIDIES MIGHT BE APPROVED.

3. COMMENT: DESPITE HIS LONGSTANDING ANTI-EC BIAS, SECSTATE FOR ENERGY BENN HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY ACTIVE SINCE JANUARY 1 IN PURSUING PERSONAL CONTACTS WITH HIS COUNTERPARTS IN MEMBER STATE CAPITALS IN AN EFFORT TO RESOLVE DIFFERENCES OVER EC ENERGY POLICY. WITH HIS NEW FOUND SPIRIT OF COOPERATION, BENN SEEMS INTENT ON BREAKING THE LOGJAM, PARTICULARLY OVER THE MSP AND EURATOM LOAN SCHEME, BY THE END OF THE UK COUNCIL PRESIDENCY IN JUNE.

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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